

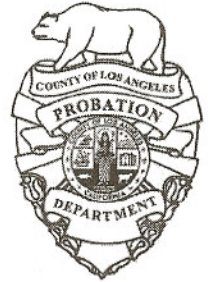


ROBERT B. TAYLOR  
Chief Probation Officer

## COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PROBATION DEPARTMENT

9150 EAST IMPERIAL HIGHWAY — DOWNEY, CALIFORNIA 90242

(562) 940-2501



October 19, 2007

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Robert B. Taylor *Robert B. Taylor*  
Chief Probation Officer

SUBJECT: **DEVELOPMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION REFORM PLAN  
FOR JUVENILE HALLS & CAMPS – SECOND PROGRESS REPORT**

Pursuant to your Board's June 19, 2007 instruction, this is our Second 60-Day Progress Report covering mid-August 2007 through mid-October 2007, regarding the development of a comprehensive plan to dramatically reform education programs in the County's juvenile halls and probation camps.

My Department continues to work on this endeavor with representatives from the various departments and agencies identified by your Board (i.e., the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools, the Los Angeles County Board of Education, Probation Commission, County Librarian, Director of Mental Health, Children's Planning Council, Chief Executive Officer, and the Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council). We have also added representatives from other departments or agencies that we deemed appropriate and that expressed an interest in this effort (i.e., the Juvenile Court, Department of Children and Family Services, and Youth Law Center).

This report provides an overview of the work and presentations conducted at our various Education Reform Committee meetings held during this period.

### **PROGRESS STATUS OVERVIEW**

During this reporting period, I have chaired four Committee meetings that have served to create constructive open discussions and to begin developing a consensus on the need to improve the education services provided to the minors in our juvenile camps and halls, while establishing the foundation for a growing interest from individuals and agencies to continue working in support of this education reform effort.



To date, our Committee meetings have focused on developing an understanding of:

- 1) Charter schools as an alternative education option (i.e., New Visions Foundation);
- 2) The Juvenile Court's expectations of education service delivery;
- 3) Alternative education programs offered by various school districts (i.e., Pomona, Los Angeles, and Chino Valley Unified School Districts) for at-risk and delinquent youth; and
- 4) Treatment and education programs offered by several community-based organizations (Youth Opportunity Movement and Boys Republic residential and day treatment programs).

Our Department's primary goal is to increase public safety through reduced recidivism and to effect positive behavioral change among probationers. We also believe it is essential to improve educational standards and outcomes for probation youth, so that they are fully equipped to perform capably whether they leave camp to finish high school, go on to college, or join the workforce.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

On August 30, 2007, we held our third meeting with the Committee. Our focus was exploring alternative education programs through charter school programs. We invited Mr. Paul F. Cummins, the Executive Director of the New Visions Foundation, to provide the Committee an overview of charter school programs. Among others, the Foundation has established St. Anne's charter school, a residential program, for pregnant girls.

### **4<sup>th</sup> MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

On September 13, 2007, we held our fourth meeting with the Committee. Our focus was on the Juvenile Court's expectations of education service delivery. We invited Judge Michael Nash and Referee Sherri Sobel to provide an overview of a remarkable handbook prepared by Ms. Sobel entitled "Bench Book for Education Issues in Dependency and Delinquency Courts" which emphasizes that the Courts have an affirmative duty to get the needs of youth addressed. A key point was that whether youth are in the dependency or delinquency system, youth in our Court schools need to be provided the same opportunity to access education services as any other youth. The handbook contains an education checklist in which judges and affected agencies need to be asking about each youth in order to understand the education needs of youth. The key individuals need to understand youths' issues, accurately report them to the Court, and the Court needs to order the appropriate action.

Youth need to be linked with the best services possible; we need assistance from their families; we need to report the issues to the Court, and work with the Courts and attorneys to see what assistance can be provided. Therefore, we must do a better job of assessing youth needs, providing them with appropriate services, reporting issues to



the Court, and requesting necessary actions from the Court. EBP treatment, education and mental health services all need to be provided based on comprehensive assessments and individual case plans, including Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) for youth with learning disabilities and/or special education needs as well as Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for all other youth.

The ideal educational structure for at-risk and delinquent youth was described as:

- Teaching in small classes;
- Separating youth into classes according to their reading and math levels;
- Providing education services through private provider(s) that have expertise in education and special education and are willing to start with the basics;
- Linking youth and their families with community resources;
- Including families in the design and implementation of education plans of their youth;
- Linking parents with resources and providing resources, if necessary; and
- Basing case plans on risk and needs assessments developed by multi-disciplinary teams and incorporating an aftercare component before youth leave the camp system.

Many at-risk and delinquent youth have limited English language proficiency; we clearly need to address this barrier. We should take advantage of the "time-out" for youth while they are in camp to change the way they think and act and ensure they have a solid academic foundation. Overall, everyone on the Committee agrees that youth should be the focal point of services with each youth having proper assessments and a case plan that involves needed EBP treatment, educational, and mental health services.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

On October 3, 2007, we held our fifth meeting with the Committee, which received two presentations. First, the Pomona Unified School District provided a presentation of their education programs. The District offers a Student Assistance Program that involves a core team consisting of a counselor, a teacher, and an administrator at each school. A case manager contacts a youth's family to find out what type of programs are needed, which school youth should go back to, reviews school credits, etc. Support groups are also available and provide an array of services including substance abuse prevention, anger management, etc.

In addition, connecting with community-based organizations is a major component to the success of Pomona Unified School District programs. The focus is on those minors who have a higher need and work closely with youth in their neighborhoods, and thus, do not send youth to other communities. Multi-disciplinary assessments are conducted. The combined program actions have resulted in decreasing suspensions and



expulsions by 25% each while increasing referrals to the Student Assistance Program and other programs by 25%.

Second, the Youth Opportunity Movement provided a presentation highlighting the following key elements of their programs:

- Working very closely with neighborhood schools;
- Releasing students from camp to go through L.A. Trade Tech;
- Looking for ways to increase student retention; and
- Helping youth go on to college.

In addition, the Committee was advised that the Probation Department has created multiple strategic planning working groups and have tentatively identified the following four education-related outcomes for reporting with the Department's dashboard reporting system, beginning in January 2008:

- 1) Number/percentage of eligible juveniles that complete high school diploma by completion of probation;
- 2) Number/percentage of eligible juveniles that obtain their G.E.D. by completion of probation;
- 3) Number/percentage of eligible juveniles that successfully enroll in a vocational education program by completion of probation; and
- 4) Number/percentage of eligible juveniles that successfully enroll in a two or four-year college by completion of probation.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

On October 18, 2007, we held our sixth meeting with the Committee, which received two presentations. First, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) presented information regarding:

- Alternative pathways for juvenile education ([www.myfuturedecision.org](http://www.myfuturedecision.org));
- Its relatively new dropout prevention and recovery program;
- Its recent collaboration with LACOE on electronic data exchange of education records for Probation youth; and
- Its hiring of 4 counselors and 9 parent advocacy unit (PAU) staff to help direct at-risk and delinquent youth into appropriate educational pathways.

The LAUSD presentation generated a very productive Committee discussion about the importance of using multidisciplinary teams (MDTs) comprised of Probation, education, and mental health staff to work with youth, their families, and community-based organizations on the development and implementation of a unified case plan for youth leaving juvenile camps.

Second, the Boys Republic summarized its residential program for 150 Boys in Chino Hills and its day treatment program for 20 youth in Monrovia, especially its:

- Comprehensive high school;
- Achievement of the types of education outcomes as indicated on page 4;
- Tracking of youth after leaving the residential program (9-month stays);
- Emphasis on developing five key work habits that are good predictors of youth being able to obtain and maintain gainful employment;
- Use of guided group interaction to address some criminogenic needs; and
- Workability program for youth with learning disabilities and/or special education needs.

Some Committee members will be touring the Boys Republic facility to identify protocols and techniques that might be applied in the Department's juvenile camps.

#### **COMMITTEE FINDINGS & OBSERVATIONS**

We have begun to develop a draft matrix of education issues for the group's review and discussion at our next two meetings:

- At our October 31<sup>st</sup> meeting, LACOE representatives will present proposed plans for addressing many of the issues raised in the Committee meetings. This will begin the "next steps" process of developing recommendations to be included in the Committee report to your Board.
- At our November 14<sup>th</sup> meeting, we hope to establish enough of a consensus so that our staff and consultants, with help volunteered from the Children's Planning Council, can prepare a preliminary draft report for the Committee to review and discuss at its December 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

We have selected a former school superintendent who has extensive expertise in educational reforms to assist us with developing specific recommendations and action plans for consideration by your Board.

We will continue to provide 60-day progress reports and intend to provide your Board with a comprehensive plan and recommendations within the next 3-4 months.



Please contact me if you have any questions or require additional information, or your staff may contact David M. Davies, Chief Deputy, Probation at (562) 940-2511.

RBT:dn

- c: Michael Nash, Presiding Judge, Juvenile Court  
William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer  
Doyle Campbell, Deputy Chief Executive Officer  
Sachi A. Hamai, Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors  
Raymond G. Fortner, Jr., County Counsel  
Dr. Darline P. Robles, Superintendent, Los Angeles County Office of Education  
Rudell S. Freer, President, Los Angeles County Board of Education  
Gabriella Holt, President, Probation Commission  
Margaret Todd, County Librarian  
Dr. Marvin J. Southard, Director, Department of Mental Health  
Cheryl Mendoza, Executive Director, Children's Planning Council  
Jose Huizar, Chair, Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council  
Trish Ploehn, Director, Department of Children and Family Services  
Judy Hammond, Public Information Officer